

Claims

1 1. A method for managing resource allocations within
2 an intellectual property portfolio, said method comprising:

3 (i) determining available resource capacity for
4 an intellectual property activity in a tracking system;

5 (ii) assigning technical attributes to the
6 activity in the tracking system;

7 (iii) apportioning resource capacity for the
8 activity by technical attribute based on a value
9 assigned to each of the technical attributes and based
10 on available resource capacity;

11 (iv) obtaining actual resource usage by technical
12 attribute from the tracking system; and

13 (v) managing resource allocation for the
14 intellectual property activity by determining the
15 difference between the actual resource usage and the
16 resource allocation by technical attribute.

1 2. The method of claim 1, wherein said managing (v)
2 comprises proactively managing resource allocation for the
3 intellectual property activity by determining the difference
4 between the actual resource usage and the resource
5 allocation by technical attribute.

1 3. The method of claim 2, further comprising for a
2 given time period, periodically repeating the obtaining (iv)
3 and the proactively managing (v) to achieve within the given
4 time period set goals for the intellectual property activity
5 based on assigned technical attributes.

1 4. The method of claim 3, wherein the assigning
2 technical attributes comprises assigning technology based
3 descriptors to different technology fields of the
4 intellectual property activity.

1 5. The method of claim 4, wherein the proactively
2 managing (v) comprises dynamically adjusting, within the
3 given time period, resource allocation to at least one
4 technology field of the intellectual property activity.

1 6. The method of claim 1, wherein the obtaining (iv)
2 comprises periodically assembling a report including the
3 actual resource usage by technical attribute and set goals
4 for the intellectual property activity based on assigned
5 technical attributes.

1 7. The method of claim 6, wherein the periodically
2 assembled report further includes the actual resource usage
3 by technical attribute for a first time period and the
4 actual resource usage by technical attribute for a second
5 time period, wherein the second time period is longer than
6 the first time period.

1 8. The method of claim 7, wherein the managing (v)
2 comprises comparing the actual resource usage by technical
3 attribute for the first time period and the actual resource
4 usage by technical attribute for the second time period, and
5 based thereon, proactively adjusting resource allocation by
6 technical attribute for the intellectual property activity
7 to achieve the set goals.

1 9. The method of claim 8, wherein the first time
2 period is less than five months and the second time period
3 is at least two times the first time period.

1 10. The method of claim 8, wherein the first time
2 period is in a range of two to four months and the second
3 time period is at least three times the first time period.

1 11. The method of claim 1, wherein the intellectual
2 property activity comprises at least one of (1) modulating
3 invention disclosure creation activity, (2) evaluating
4 invention disclosures, (3) searching inventions based on
5 evaluated invention disclosures, (4) filing patent
6 applications based on evaluated invention disclosures,
7 (5) issuing patents, and (6) maintaining issued patents.

12. The method of claim 1, further comprising setting intellectual property activity goals, the setting including at least some of: (1) understanding current and future opportunity space for a business; (2) understanding the current intellectual property portfolio; (3) identifying technology fields requiring intellectual property development; (4) setting intellectual property development guidelines; and (5) identifying and communicating specific technology opportunities; and wherein the managing (v) comprises proactively managing the resource allocation by technical attribute to achieve the intellectual property activity goals.

13. The method of claim 1, wherein the intellectual property activity comprises invention development, and wherein the managing (v) comprises proactively managing resource allocation to achieve invention development goals using the actual resource usage and the prior resource allocation by technical attribute.

14. The method of claim 13, wherein the assigning (ii) comprises assigning a technology tag to each invention disclosure, wherein the technical attributes comprise at least one technology tag.

1 15. A method for managing invention disclosures,
2 comprising:

3 determining a desired number of invention
4 disclosures based on available resources;

5 apportioning the desired number of invention
6 disclosures by a plurality of technical attributes
7 based on a value assigned to each of the technical
8 attributes;

9 tracking an actual number of invention disclosures
10 by technical attribute and comparing the actual number
11 of invention disclosures with the desired number of
12 invention disclosures; and

13 responsive to the comparing, proactively managing at
14 least one of invention disclosure creation and
15 invention disclosure evaluation for patent searching or
16 patent application filing.

1 16. The method of claim 15, wherein said tracking
2 comprises storing in a database the actual number of
3 invention disclosures by technical attribute and the desired
4 number of invention disclosures, and periodically generating
5 from the database a report to facilitate said comparing and
6 said proactively managing.

1 17. The method of claim 16, wherein the report
2 includes the actual number of invention disclosures by
3 technical attribute for a first time period and the actual
4 number of invention disclosures by technical attribute for a
5 second time period, wherein the second time period is longer
6 than the first time period.

1 18. The method of claim 17, wherein the second time
2 period is inclusive of the first time period.

1 19. The method of claim 18, wherein the first time
2 period is less than five months and the second time period
3 is at least two times the first time period.

1 20. The method of claim 16, wherein said proactively
2 managing comprises proactively taking action or adjusting
3 criteria to achieve set goals for a given time period for
4 said at least one of invention disclosure creation, and
5 invention disclosure evaluation for patent searching or
6 patent application filing.

1 21. The method of claim 20, wherein said technical
2 attributes comprise at least one of technology-based
3 descriptors or location-based descriptors, and wherein said
4 method further comprises assigning a technical attribute to
5 each actual invention disclosure for use by said tracking
6 system.

1 22. The method of claim 21, wherein said proactively
2 managing comprises adjusting at least one of invention
3 disclosure creation, invention disclosure evaluation for
4 patent searching, or patent application filing responsive to
5 the comparing.

1 23. The method of claim 16, wherein the periodically
2 assembled report includes the actual number of invention
3 disclosures by technical attribute for a first time period
4 and the actual number of invention disclosures by technical
5 attribute for a second time period, wherein the second time
6 period is longer than the first time period, and wherein the
7 comparing comprises comparing the actual number of invention
8 disclosures by technical attribute for the first time period
9 and the actual number of invention disclosures by technical
10 attribute for the second time period, and wherein the
11 proactively managing comprises responsive thereto, adjusting
12 criteria to achieve set goals at least one of invention
13 disclosure creation, and invention disclosure evaluation for
14 patent searching or patent application filing.

1 24. The method of claim 23, further comprising
2 identifying the set goals, the identifying including at
3 least some of: (1) understanding current and future
4 opportunities space for a business; (2) understanding the
5 current intellectual property portfolio; (3) identifying
6 technology fields requiring intellectual property
7 development; (4) setting intellectual property development
8 objectives; and (5) identifying and communicating specific
9 technology opportunities.

1 25. A data structure for facilitating managing
2 resource allocations within an intellectual property
3 portfolio, said data structure comprising:

4 a first field including actual resource usage for an
5 intellectual property activity by technical attributes
6 over a first time period;

7 a second field including actual resource usage for
8 the intellectual property activity by technical
9 attributes over a second time period, wherein the
10 second time period is longer than the first time
11 period; and

12 wherein comparison of information within the first
13 field and the second field facilitates managing
14 resource allocations for the intellectual property
15 activity within the intellectual property portfolio.

1 26. The data structure of claim 25, wherein the second
2 time period is inclusive of the first time period.

1 27. The data structure of claim 26, wherein the first
2 time period is less than five months and the second time
3 period is at least two times the first time period.

1 28. The data structure of claim 26, wherein the first
2 time period is in a range of two to four months and the
3 second time period is at least three times the first time
4 period.

1 29. The data structure of claim 25, further comprising
2 a third field including a set goal for a given time period
3 for resource usage for the intellectual property activity by
4 technical attributes.

1 30. The data structure of claim 25, wherein the
2 intellectual property activity comprises at least one of (1)
3 modulating invention disclosure creation activity, (2)
4 evaluating invention disclosures, (3) searching inventions
5 based on evaluated invention disclosures, (4) filing patent
6 applications based on evaluated invention disclosures, (5)
7 issuing patents, and (6) maintaining issued patents.

1 31. Apparatus for managing resource allocations within
2 an intellectual property portfolio, said apparatus
3 comprising:

4 means for determining available resource capacity
5 for an intellectual property activity in a tracking
6 system;

7 means for assigning technical attributes to the
8 activity in the tracking system;

9 means for apportioning resource capacity for the
10 activity by technical attribute based on a value
11 assigned to each of the technical attributes and based
12 on available resource capacity;

13 means for obtaining actual resource usage by
14 technical attribute from the tracking system; and

15 means for managing resource allocation for the
16 intellectual property activity by determining the
17 difference between the actual resource usage and the
18 resource allocation by technical attribute.

1 32. The system of claim 31, wherein said means for
2 managing (v) comprises means for proactively managing
3 resource allocation for the intellectual property activity
4 by determining the difference between the actual resource
5 usage and the resource allocation by technical attribute.

1 38. The system of claim 37, wherein the means for
2 managing comprises means for comparing the actual resource
3 usage by technical attribute for the first time period and
4 the actual resource usage by technical attribute for the
5 second time period, and based thereon, means for proactively
6 adjusting resource allocation by technical attribute for the
7 intellectual property activity to achieve the set goals.

1 39. The system of claim 31, wherein the intellectual
2 property activity comprises at least one of (1) modulating
3 invention disclosure creation activity, (2) evaluating
4 invention disclosures, (3) searching inventions based on
5 evaluated invention disclosures, (4) filing patent
6 applications based on evaluated invention disclosures,
7 (5) issuing patents, and (6) maintaining issued patents.

1 40. The system of claim 31, further comprising means
2 for setting intellectual property activity goals, the
3 setting including at least some of: (1) understanding
4 current and future opportunity space for a business; (2)
5 understanding the current intellectual property portfolio;
6 (3) identifying technology fields requiring intellectual
7 property development; (4) setting intellectual property
8 development objectives; and (5) identifying and
9 communicating specific technology opportunities; and wherein
10 the managing (v) comprises proactively managing the resource
11 allocation by technical attribute to achieve the
12 intellectual property activity goals.

1 41. The system of claim 31, wherein the intellectual
2 property activity comprises invention development, and
3 wherein the means for managing comprises means for
4 proactively managing resource allocation to achieve
5 invention development goals using the actual resource usage
6 and the prior resource allocation by technical attribute.

1 42. The system of claim 41, wherein the means for
2 assigning comprises means for assigning a technology tag to
3 each invention disclosure, wherein the technical attributes
4 comprise at least one technology tag.

1 43. Apparatus for managing invention disclosures,
2 comprising:

3 means for determining a desired number of invention
4 disclosures based on available resources;

5 means for apportioning the desired number of
6 invention disclosures by a plurality of technical
7 attributes based on a value assigned to each of the
8 technical attributes;

9 means for tracking an actual number of invention
10 disclosures by technical attribute and for comparing
11 the actual number of invention disclosures by technical
12 attribute with the desired number of invention
13 disclosures; and

14 means for proactively managing, responsive to the
15 means for comparing, at least one of invention
16 disclosure creation, and invention disclosure
17 evaluation for patent searching or patent application
18 filing.

1 44. At least one program storage device readable by a
2 machine, tangibly embodying at least one program of
3 instructions executable by the machine to perform a method
4 of managing resource allocations within an intellectual
5 property portfolio, said method comprising:

6 (i) determining available resource capacity for
7 an intellectual property activity in a tracking system;

8
9 (ii) assigning technical attributes to the
10 activity in the tracking system;

11 (iii) apportioning resource capacity for the
12 activity by technical attribute based on a value
13 assigned to each of the technical attributes and based
14 on the available resource capacity;

15 (iv) obtaining actual resource usage by technical
16 attribute from the tracking system; and

17 (v) managing resource allocation for the
18 intellectual property activity by determining the
19 difference between the actual resource usage and the
20 resource allocation by technical attribute.

1 45. The at least one program storage device of claim
2 44, wherein said managing (v) comprises proactively managing
3 resource allocation for the intellectual property activity
4 by determining the difference between the actual resource
5 usage and the resource allocation by technical attribute.

1 46. The at least one program storage device of claim
2 45, further comprising for a given time period, periodically
3 repeating the obtaining (iv) and the proactively managing
4 (v) to achieve within the given time period set goals for
5 the intellectual property activity based on assigned
6 technical attributes.

1 47. The at least one program storage device of claim
2 46, wherein the assigning technical attributes comprises
3 assigning technology based descriptors to different
4 technology fields of the intellectual property activity.

1 48. The at least one program storage device of claim
2 47, wherein the proactively managing (v) comprises
3 dynamically adjusting, within the given time period,
4 resource allocation to at least one technology field of the
5 intellectual property activity.

1 49. The at least one program storage device of claim
2 44, wherein the obtaining (iv) comprises periodically
3 assembling a report including the actual resource usage by
4 technical attribute and set goals for the intellectual
5 property activity based on assigned technical attributes.

1 50. The at least one program storage device of claim
2 49, wherein the periodically assembled report further
3 includes the actual resource usage by technical attribute
4 for a first time period and the actual resource usage by
5 technical attribute for a second time period, wherein the
6 second time period is longer than the first time period.

1 51. The at least one program storage device of claim
2 50, wherein the managing (v) comprises comparing the actual
3 resource usage by technical attribute for the first time
4 period and the actual resource usage by technical attribute
5 for the second time period, and based thereon, proactively
6 adjusting resource allocation by technical attribute for the
7 intellectual property activity to achieve the set goals.

1 52. The at least one program storage device of claim
2 44, wherein the intellectual property activity comprises at
3 least one of (1) modulating invention disclosure creation
4 activity, (2) evaluating invention disclosures, (3)
5 searching inventions based on evaluated invention
6 disclosures, (4) filing patent applications based on
7 evaluated invention disclosures, (5) issuing patents, and
8 (6) maintaining issued patents.

1 53. The at least one program storage device of claim
2 44, further comprising setting intellectual property
3 activity goals, the setting including at least some of: (1)
4 understanding current and future opportunity space for a
5 business; (2) understanding the current intellectual
6 property portfolio; (3) identifying technology fields
7 requiring intellectual property development; (4) setting
8 intellectual property development objectives; and (5)
9 identifying and communicating specific technology
10 opportunities; and wherein the managing (v) comprises
11 proactively managing the resource allocation by technical
12 attribute to achieve the intellectual property activity
13 goals.

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1 56. At least one program storage device readable by a
2 machine, tangibly embodying at least one program of
3 instructions executable by the machine to perform a method
4 of managing invention disclosures, said method comprising:

5 determining a desired number of invention
6 disclosures based on available resources;

7 apportioning the desired number of invention
8 disclosures by a plurality of technical attributes
9 based on a value assigned to each of the technical
10 attributes;

11 tracking an actual number of invention disclosures
12 by technical attribute and comparing the actual number
13 of invention disclosures with the desired number of
14 invention disclosures; and

15 responsive to the comparing, proactively managing at
16 least one of invention disclosure creation and
17 invention disclosure evaluation for patent searching or
18 patent application filing.

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